The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives news accounts and editorial interpretations of matters affecting labor concerning its industrial, legislative, and judicial fields, and acquires other information of benefit to the trade union movement.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

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Support The MIGHTY WAR LOAN

WHOLE NO. 1779 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., TUESDAY, MAY 15, 1945 | GEORGE MEANY, Secretary-Treasurer | VOL. 35, NO. 20

POST-WAR POLICY

Washington, D. C.—The AFL Executive Council adopted the following declaration on national and international postwar policy before adjourning its Spring session:

The deep-grounded determination of the American people that total war, with its horrors, shall not again return, justifies the fullest exploration by our nation of the possibilities of an international organization of nations which shall underwrite an enduring peace.

The outlines of such an organization were tentatively sketched at Dumbarton Oaks. At San Francisco, the United Nations will address themselves to the task of filling out the scaffolding of the Dumbarton Oaks decisions, and of embodying them with a workable and acceptable permanent structure of peace.

Upon their success hinges much of the future hope of mankind.

Industry, labor and agriculture should full-heartedly support the objectives of the San Francisco meeting.

We are deeply interested and greatly concerned in the attainment and maintenance of a future and permanent world peace. To do this we must maintain and safeguard the economic and political well being of the American people here at home.

Great as are our resources, they are not inexhaustible. There are limitations and restrictions upon our abilities to contribute which, if disregarded, will place an undue strain upon our domestic economy and which, if unheeded, will reflect injury not alone upon ourselves but as well upon those whom we would benefit.

We are, therefore, faced with the prime necessity and requirement of conserving and safeguarding and advancing the economic and social interests of all our people and particularly those of America's wage earners. To this end we hold imperative and essential the following program and procedure:

1—Maintenance of a high and ever progressively increasing American standard of living, measured in real purchasing power. This is a basic consideration. It should govern all our domestic and foreign policy relations and decisions.

2—The planning and financing of a vast program of urban and rural housing, of road renovation and rebuilding, of rural electrification and of long overdue public works is of utmost importance. Such a program will provide the broad economic basis for a successful transition of our national economy from war to peacetime production. It is essential that this program have precedence over any other domestic objective. The implementing of such a program guaranteeing, as it does, a continued period of full employment and of sustained high living standards to the American people, is an obligation we owe to millions of men and women in the armed forces and in the armaments from factories converting from war to peacetime production, who will return to seek employment after the war.

3—Safeguarding the foundation of our American way of life and of well being by the maintenance of unclosed economic opportunities for our citizens under a system of free enterprise is imperative to the perpetuity of our constitutional social and political order. This policy must continue to guide the American people in the after-war period. The channels of opportunity must be kept open for our returning men in the armed forces and for the youths who are to follow us.

International cartels and international trade controls which tend to limit or restrict the free and full scope of the economic opportunities of our people must be discouraged.

4—Government controls and direction of our life and relations made imperative by war requirements and necessities must not continue after the emergencies of war have passed. We must insist upon an orderly but speedy end of the economic regimentation, direction and control made necessary and accepted as an essential expedient during the war period.

5—We will continue to contribute our proportionate share together with other nations in organizing for peace conditions and providing for world reconstruction and in rendering fullhearted support to policies that will facilitate self-sustaining economic recovery of all nations and thus contribute toward a healthy world economy. We must nevertheless avoid the errors of the '20s in exporting both goods and money to defaulting foreign customers and in extending help to other nations we should predicate such help upon a selfliquidating basis.

6—Ideological infiltration into our American political and economic life by propagandists of foreign nations or directed, subsidized or controlled by foreign sources, must not be permitted. The American people have no intent or desire to interfere with the internal political arrangements of other nations. We must insist that other nations be equally scrupulous in discouraging divisive political intervention by those acting in their behalf in our country. Ideological activities must stop at the nation's boundaries.

AFL Enters Pact With Contractors To Settle Disputes Without Gov't

Agreement By Building Trades Unions Seeks To Keep Out Federal Agencies

Washington, D. C.—The Associated General Contractors of America and the Building and Construction Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor have agreed upon a program for postwar labor-management relations which provides machinery for speedy and harmonious settlement of all kinds of disputes without recourse to government intervention.

The program as made public by the two groups follows:

"1—Maintain and improve the present working relations in the industry.

"2—Prepare a record of the points of agreement existing on a national basis.

"3—Set up a joint committee to handle within the industry the various problems arising which cannot be dealt with locally.

"4—Retain within the industry control over its own problems rather than having to resort to Federal or State legislation or administrative action."

Interpreting these items, authoritative sources said that the first point was based on the consideration that the war record of the parties in maintaining an amicable relationship was the best in the history of the industry. It is regarded virtually as an affirmation of closed shop conditions won by AFL unions in the building industry.

The purpose of the second point is to collect agreements and decisions which have been made on a national basis and to codify and distribute them for guidance in the settlement of local disputes.

Point three, it was explained, means that eventually a board of appeals will be set up to which local disputes will be taken for settlement. A basic motive in the whole agreement is to avoid invocation of assistance of government mediation or arbitration machinery.

Harry A. Dick of Portland, Oreg., president of the Associated General Contractors, said in an accompanying statement that "management and labor in the construction industry believe that with their intimate knowledge of the industry they are better qualified than anyone else to talk out the problems which will arise in the postwar period between labor and management in construction."

Labor Praised For Victory Efforts

Washington, D. C.—High official tributes were paid to labor following V-E Day for their part in bringing about the defeat of the Nazis.

In each case, however, the praise served as an introduction for exhortations to the nation's workers to continue giving faithful service until Japan also is crushed.

Under Secretary of War Patterson said:

"Every American worker had a part in our great victory over Germany. Let us not forget that we still have an enormous job to do. The nation is counting on American labor and industry to provide the weapons and equipment needed to crush Japan."

WPB Chairman Krug, in a telegram to AFL President Green, said:

"On behalf of the American Government and our fighting forces, I want to express heartfelt thanks to the millions of American workers who have worked so loyally in the task of building an arsenal for democracy unequaled in the world's history—an arsenal that has been a decisive factor in making V-E Day possible. There remains a big job ahead of us in keeping the A-p war machine and I know that the men and women of the American Federation of Labor will continue to devote themselves unstintingly to that task."

The Labor-Management Committee of the War Manpower Commission issued a statement saying the same thing in practically the same words.

OPA Prices Invite Huge Profits In Civilian Goods, Shishkin Warns

Washington, D. C.—Prices set by OPA for consumer goods soon to be brought back into production open the way for huge profits during the reconversion period, Boris Shishkin, AFL economist, warned.

The OPA formula, Shishkin pointed out, is compatible one-sided because it makes allowances to manufacturers for cost-increasing factors but completely disregards cost-reducing advantages resulting from war experience.

Chief of these, in Shishkin's opinion, is the increase of labor productivity. He said:

"In the munitions industry, for example, productivity increased 72 percent—that is, 100 workers are turning out as many guns or shells in a given time as 172 workers did back in 1942. This increase is due to technical improvements that have taken place during the war years.

"No one expects this high increase in productivity to be carried over into peacetime production, but certainly a part of it will be held. Yet no provision is made for this in the formula."

The AFL economist also criticized the OPA for "thinking in terms of 1942 production." Such thinking, he said, is "dangerous, because prewar production won't be nearly enough if we are to have a high-level and full employment. Such thinking does not take into account the tremendous backlog of consumer demand now awaiting satisfaction."

At the same time, Shishkin found fault with the reconversion employment figures given out last week by Fred M. Vinson, War Mobilization and Reconversion Director, saying they were too low.

"Mr. Vinson underestimated the unemployment that can be expected and which the government should plan to meet," he said. "I don't think it a good public policy to underestimate the unemployment that now seems inevitable."

Three AFL Heroes Decorated With Silver Star For Bravery

Washington, D. C.—Three more AFL union members, now serving with the armed forces, have been singled out by the War Department for outstanding bravery in action and have been awarded the Silver Star.

Tech. Sgt. George E. Freitag, of New York City, former employe of Pepsi-Cola Company, and a member of Local Brotherhood of Warehousemen and Joiners, was awarded the decoration for bravery and devotion to duty under intense enemy fire without thought of his personal safety, the War Department said.

On July 14, 1944, the crew of a Flying Fortress, of which Sergeant Freitag was a member, took part in a bombing mission against a heavily-defended oil center in Hungary. When the plane was directly over the target, heavy antiaircraft fire caused severe damage. A direct burst of enemy flak exploded within the bomb bay and wounded three crew members. Even though their plane was on fire, with two bombs jammed in the racks, the oxygen system and control damaged and the target dive blown off, the others refused to make a try for their home base. The radio operator was too seriously wounded to help or to leave the plane. Through their skill, knowledge and resourcefulness this courageous crew returned to their base without further damage to the plane or injury to the crew.

This gallant group of the 15th Air Force examined their plane after returning to base and counted 30,000 flak punctures.

After completing 24 bombing missions, Sergeant Freitag was returned to this country and is now stationed at Lowry Field, Denver. While in Italy he was awarded the Air Medal with three Oak Leaf Clusters.

For demonstrating initiative and courage in combat action last June 22, Pfc. Frank H. Ditsel, Infantry, Philadelphia, was awarded the Silver Star, the War Department said. Ditsel, who also holds the Purple Heart medal, is a member of Local 1210, Amalgamated Association of Street, Electric Railway and Motor Coach Employees.

"For six years prior to his induction into the Army, he was employed as Information Telephone Operator with the Pennsylvania Greyhound Lines, Philadelphia.

Pfc. Ditsel, injured in action in France, has returned from overseas and is now convalescing at Thomas M. England General Hospital, Atlantic City.

Six days after American troops landed in Normandy, S/Sgt. John S. Ratkiewicz, a member of Local Union 375, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Chauffeurs, Warehousemen and Helpers, AFL, of Allentown, Pa., displayed great courage as a mortar squad leader under enemy fire for which he was given the Silver Star, the War Department said.

During a fierce counterattack, American mortar crews were forced to leave their weapons due to intense German fire. Sergeant Ratkiewicz, mortar squad leader, immediately took over as a gunner and returned fire on the German forces. His courageous action played an important part in smashing the counterattack and was a source of inspiration to his men. Thus his battalion was able to withdraw safely. The action took place on June 12, 1944, in Normandy.

Sergeant Ratkiewicz is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph C. Ratkiewicz of 822 Berwick Street, Easton, Pa. His father is a member of the Carpenter's Union. Prior to his enlistment in the Army on May 12, 1943, he was employed as a truckdriver by M. Kourtz & Company, furniture dealers.

LABOR SUPPORT HELPS IN FIGHT AGAINST VD

New York City.—Organized labor has become an increasingly important ally in the nation's fight against the venereal diseases, Dr. Walter Clarke, Executive Director of the American Social Hygiene Association, declared upon issuing the Association's Annual Report for 1944.

"Through the active support and interest of officers and editors of many union bodies, large numbers of war-essential workers in industry have received valuable information about the control and prevention of syphilis and gonorrhea," Dr. Clarke said, "and this splendid cooperation is continuing on an expanding scale."

The association reports that its series of seven articles, "Unite Against VD," has appeared in more than 70 labor publications with a combined circulation of more than three million.

AFL ACTORS ENTERTAIN HOSPITALIZED VETERANS

Chicago.—More than 100 members of the Chicago local of American Federation of Radio Artists (AFL) are participating in shows at veterans hospitals sponsored by the Red Cross.

Handling the shows for the Red Cross is the United Theatrical War Activities Committee. Some 60 actors are appearing in shows sponsored by Stage Door Canteen, Inc., which got its start in New York and has since been organized here.

SUPREME COURT UPHOLDS PORTAL-TO-PORTAL PAY

Washington, D. C.—Travel time pay, an objective toward which workers have been striving in a number of industries, was bolstered anew by an important Supreme Court decision.

By a narrow five-to-four margin, the tribunal ruled that travel underground in bituminous mines to the face of coal deposits was subject to actual work and hence must be paid for under the Wage-Hour Act.

THE AFL PRESENTS . . . 'BUILDERS OF VICTORY'

The Dramatic Story of Labor's Own Seabees

OVER CBS—EVERY SATURDAY—3:45 P.M., E.W.T.

Few War Controls Dropped; Wages Will Remain Frozen

Manpower Curbs Remain Tight Despite Unemployment Threat

Washington, D. C.—Workers separated from their war production jobs by cutbacks are not going to be permitted to pick up any job they can find under the new regulations issued by the War Manpower Commission. Strict hiring controls will be maintained in many sections of the nation, WMC Chairman McNutt said.

In Group 1 areas, where serious shortages still exist, all controls and the 45-hour week will be continued. A sharp drop in the number of such areas was predicted as the result of cutbacks in war production.

In Group 2 areas, where there is a balance between labor supply and demand, controls will be continued or eased at the option of the area director after consultation with labor-management committees and with the approval of regional directors. The 48-hour week will be optional.

In Group 3 and 4 areas, where labor is most plentiful, all manpower controls will be eliminated. The government is still stressing the desirability of shifting war contracts to these areas.

If unemployment develops during the transition period in Group 1 and 2 areas, McNutt said, local manpower directors may be authorized to issue "limited" or open referral cards which permit workers to accept any job they can find and manpower ceilings will be temporarily adjusted or lifted entirely. At the same time the U. S. Employment Service will actively solicit applications for workers from all employers.

After July 1 a new system of area classification will be installed, McNutt promised, and manpower will be made available in increasing quantities to new and expanded civilian industries.

New Government Policies Affecting Workers Now In Effect

Washington, D. C.—Sweeping changes were put into effect by the government on the home front immediately after V-E Day but few federal controls were lifted, despite growing indications that production is due to drop sharply and cause mounting unemployment.

Major policies governing the period until the defeat of Japan, as outlined by federal agencies, follow:

1. WAGES—The War Labor Board announced that the wage freeze will continue indefinitely. It will not permit further increases in wage rates, nor will it allow wage reductions in industries "converting to peace production. However, take-home wages are bound to fall, due to loss of overtime and the WLB, at present, doesn't intend to take any action to prevent this. A more lenient policy on "fringe" wage adjustments may be expected and the board also will permit converted plants not seeking increases in price ceilings to set up new wage structures through collective bargaining without obtaining prior WLB approval.

2. MANPOWER—Limited relaxation of manpower controls and provisions for more flexible local administration were announced by WMC Chairman McNutt, but he emphasized that general lifting of these controls is not in prospect until the Pacific war is won.

3. RECONVERSION—WPB Chairman Krug revealed restrictions on manufacture of seventy-three civilian products and set July 1 as the date on which business will have unrestricted access to such steel, copper and aluminum as is not taken up by priority orders for war and war-supporting activities. Within the next few months, Krug said, half of the 420 orders prohibiting or curtailing civilian production will be removed. He said the WPB aims to encourage small business men to get going as soon as they can, but until priority controls are lifted they will have to get along with surplus, idle or second-hand materials. Industries using large quantities of metals, such as automobiles, refrigerators and stoves, will not get official permission to reconvert for some time.

War Mobilization Director Vinson said price controls would be maintained, but every housewife knows that prices continue to soar despite OPA ceilings.

Vinson said the 40-hour week will be maintained in most war industries. However, in areas where manpower shortages no longer exist, there will be a general return to the 40-hour week, with resultant loss of overtime pay.

Food rationing, Vinson emphasized, will stay. The prospects are that food shortages will become more severe this year. Thus far, government attempts to combat black markets have been futile.

Taxes on low-income groups are not likely to be lowered in the near future, although a strong move already has started in Congress to give tax relief to those in the belief that corporations will use the tax windfalls for investment in increased peacetime production.

Most conventions, including those of labor unions, will remain under ban. Some of the largest AFL unions have been forced to call off conventions scheduled for this year because of this ruling.

Gasoline rations are expected to be eased—but, but coal and oil for home heating will still be curtailed.

Transportation facilities will remain tight and restrictions on civilian travel will continue. In fact, the war against Japan may tie up transportation even more than formerly.

As yet, no government program has been shaped to equal unemployment which may hit the five million mark by the end of the year as war contracts are canceled.

The building industry, which could very well take up the slack of unemployment, is still stalled due to shortage of such vital materials as brick, lumber, plumbing supplies and metal home equipment.

Vast War Production Still Needed To Fight Japs, Somervell Reveals

Washington, D. C.—America's armed forces are still going to need a tremendous amount of war material to carry on the war against Japan, Gen. Brehon Somervell, commander of the Army Service Forces, declared in an interview.

The battle of the Pacific, he disclosed, will call for more production of some items than was needed last year for the war on two fronts. These include clothing and all materials and supplies for port, shelter and construction facilities.

Marked increases in armament production also are landing vehicles, steel barges, Browning machine guns, self-propelled artillery, radio equipment and a number of medical supplies.

On the list for production cutbacks, now or soon, are heavy bombers, artillery ammunition, trucks, tanks, and small arms.

Housing the armed forces in the Pacific was characterized by Gen. Somervell as "the biggest dwelling construction job ever undertaken by man."

"In England," he continued, "we had every advantage that a civilized and hospitable ally could afford. Transportation facilities, excellent harbors, communications systems—all ready made; and a great deal of shelter—ready built. In Manila there are only a handful of houses left standing. There are 500 boats sunk in the harbor. The only electrical supply comes from a small power plant amid the wreckage of a brewery. Practically everything our Army will need must be built from scratch."

Only between 60 and 75 percent of surplus equipment in the European war zone can be recovered for shipment to the Pacific, Maj. Gen. Walter A. Wood said.

Howard Bruce, Director of Materiel for the Army Service Forces, paid high tribute to labor's production performances. He said that during the Germans breakthrough in the Belgian "bulge" last Fall, "the splendid response of American labor and industry solved the emergency problem."

Returning Veterans Disgusted At Low Pay Obtainable For Jobs

New York City.—The propaganda about high wartime wages, which many members of the armed forces swallowed whole, is now turning into sullen rage in the minds of veterans seeking civilian jobs after being discharged from the Army and Navy.

A large number of these veterans in this area are unemployed because they are looking for the same high-paying jobs offered by the U. S. Employment Service at pay which is sometimes less than they received in the service.

Frank Newcomer, veterans' representative of the U. S. Employment Service, said there was a pressing demand for discharged men in industries throughout the state, but that many of the men were dissatisfied with the jobs offered and had refused to take them.

"Veterans coming back today," Mr. Newcomer declared, "have a fantastic idea of what jobs are paying. Then, also, they want to have better jobs than the ones they held before entering the services. And finally, they don't want to go away from home for jobs."

The top result, he said, was a large number of veterans shopping around for jobs and meanwhile deriving benefits such as unemployment payments.

On the salary issue, it was held that veterans were hearing greatly exaggerated stories regarding present pay by industry. Another factor, cited by many men, was that because of technical jobs in the Army, they had earned more in the service than they could get in private industry. This situation, Mr. Newcomer said, required a certain readjustment period.

BUSINESS ORGAN HITS LOW JOBLESS BENEFITS

Washington, D. C.—One of the nation's leading management publications, "Business Week," has come out in support of labor's contention that unemployment insurance benefits in the states are far too low to aid workers over the postwar economic let-down.

"Business Week" estimated that average benefits will amount to less than $15 a week, and that, because of disqualifications of one kind or another, only one-third of those actually idle will be able to draw compensation under state systems.

AFL COUNCIL TO MEET AUG. 6 IN CHICAGO

Washington, D. C.—The next meeting of the AFL Executive Council will open in Chicago Aug. 6 and continue for 2 weeks.

At this session, the council will draft its report to the 65th annual convention of the American Federation of Labor which is scheduled to start on Oct. 1, also in Chicago.

Because of transportation difficulties, union officials planning to attend either of these meetings are cautioned to make railroad and hotel reservations well in advance.

MACHINISTS' COUNCIL ASKS HIGHER PAY

Washington, D. C.—Demands for wage increases to make up for the loss of overtime and the decline of "take-home" pay were made by the executive council of the International Association of Machinists meeting here.

The Machinists group also voiced strong opposition to peacetime compulsory conscription.

AFL ENDORSES RAISE FOR CONGRESS—RSVP

Washington, D. C.—Before adjourning its Spring session, the AFL Executive Council went on record unanimously in favor of increased compensation for members of Congress.

The council, which previously had urged Congress to approve legislation increasing the basic pay of classified government employes, felt that Congressmen also deserve relief from increased living costs.

The House of Representatives already has approved a bill to allow each of its members $2,500 a year extra for "expenses." This money would be tax-exempt. The Senate is expected to broaden the measure to include its own members, as well.

TEAMSTER GIVEN NAVY MEDAL FOR GALLANTRY

Washington, D. C.—For conspicuous gallantry and utter disregard for his own personal safety, William A. Shelton, Gunner's Mate, First Class, USNR, of San Jose, Calif., has been awarded the Silver Star Medal by the Navy Department. A member of the AFL's International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Shelton was formerly employed by the Permanente Corporation, San Jose.

Shelton was a member of the crew of a U. S. submarine when two planes were forced down near a Japs-held base in the Pacific area. In the face of concentrated enemy fire, he remained on the deck of the sub to help rescue the two pilots.

"His heroic conduct in the face of grave danger," the Navy Department said, "was in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."